

Getting Assistance

Get help as **soon** as you need it. Don't wait until a test is near. The new material builds on the previous sections, so anything you don't understand now will make future material difficult to understand.

Use the Resources You Have Available

- **Ask** questions in class. You get help **and** stay actively involved in the class.
- **Visit** the Math Tutorial. **Ask** friends, members of your study group, or anyone else who can help. The classmate who explains something to you learns just as much as you do, for he/she must think carefully about how to explain the particular concept or solution in a clear way. So don't be reluctant to ask a classmate.
- **Go** to the Math Help Sessions or other tutoring sessions on campus.
- Find a private tutor if you can't get enough help from other sources.
- **All** students need help at some point, so be sure to get the help **you** need.

Asking Questions

Don't be afraid to ask questions. **Any** question is better than no question at all (at least your Instructor/tutor will know you are confused). But a **good question** will allow your helper to quickly identify exactly **what** you don't understand.

- Not too helpful comment: "I don't understand this section." The best you can expect in reply to such a remark is a brief review of the section, and this will likely overlook the particular thing(s) which you don't understand.
- Good comment: "I don't understand why $f(x + h)$ doesn't equal $f(x) + f(h)$." This is a very specific remark that will get a very specific response and hopefully clear up your difficulty.
- Good question: "How can you tell the difference between the equation of a circle and the equation of a line?"
- Okay question: "How do you do #17?"
- Better question: "Can you show me how to set up #17?" (the Instructor can let you try to finish the problem on your own), or "This is how I tried to do #17. What went wrong?" The focus of attention is on **your** thought process.
- Right after you get help with a problem, work another similar problem by yourself.

You Control the Help You Get

Helpers should be **coaches**, not crutches. They should encourage you, give you hints as you need them, and sometimes show you how to do problems. But they should **not**, nor be expected to, actually do the work **you** need to do. They are there to help you figure out how to learn math for **yourself**.

- When you go to the tutorial, your study group or a tutor, have a specific list of questions prepared in advance. **You** should run the session as much as possible.
- Do not allow yourself to become dependent on a tutor. The tutor cannot take the exams for you. You must take care to be the one in control of tutoring sessions.
- You must recognize that sometimes you do need some coaching to help you through, and it is up to you to seek out that coaching.